TOWN & COUNTRY CHURCH

*These Papers*

BECAUSE of wartime printing conditions, it has been found necessary to issue TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH as a bulletin without regular monthly frequency. We expect, however, to be able to make available a series of informal papers, and to print nine of these issues in the course of twelve months, as we had planned and promised. The Committee on Town and Country of the Home Missions Council, the Federal Council of Churches and the International Council of Religious Education asks you to be patient if copies do not arrive regularly.

Brief stories of what people are doing in local congregations and communities will be the chief features. The aim is to help put the worker in the small community into touch with numerous activities.

**Part of Larger Program**

The paper will be an important part of an enlarged "cooperative rural church program," that will encourage a national "rural church movement." The paper will be closely linked with a regularly held National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country.

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This Issue
*No. 15*
*Published February, 1945*

# The Town and Country Meet At Church

WALTER H. UPTON

• Ours is not vastly different from many other mid-western areas where the town and country are closely related, both from the geographical and the realistic point of view. The town of McPherson is the home of some 7,500 people. Stretching away in all directions is the great mid-Kansas wheat and oil section of the sun-flower state. Wednesdays and Saturdays, particularly, bring great crowds from the surrounding rural communities into the town to attend the mid-week sales at the stock pavilion and to shop at the stores.

This county, according to state records, is at the top in the state in the matter of "per capita" wealth. In the successive United War Fund Relief and War Bond drives this county has taken a back seat for no one. It has always crowded the "top of the list."

## Farm Families Active

The Congregational Church in our town has had an enviable reputation here for more than 70 years. Always a town church, it has, nevertheless, recognized the importance of meeting face to face the fact that a great many of its constituent members live in the rural area about the town. This has been particularly true during the past few years. Farm families are active in the work of the local church, and they attend its services of worship with a fair degree of regularity. They are represented in the work of the well-organized Women's Union, the Men's Club and the officialdom of the entire church proper.

Early in the fall plans were begun adequately to observe "Harvest Festival Sunday." An active, representative committee was elected by the Church Cabinet well in advance of the Harvest Festival date, with the power to lay plans and execute them. The first step taken was to inform the entire church membership of the anticipated plan through the regular church bulletin, the parish paper, the local press and a general parish letter to every family.

## Harvest Festival

Two members of the committee on arrangements were themselves active farmers. They helped in arranging for the products from the fields and gardens, with which the church sanctuary was to be decorated on the morning of the festival. During the week previous, the entire plan was gone over in detail. Care was taken that coarseness and crudity should not crowd out artistry and worshipful symmetry. In place of the regular "flowers" in the church chancel, there appeared also small pumpkins, decorative gourds, ears of corn, etc. The utmost caution was exercised in an attempt to make the occasion beautiful as well as suggestive of the harvest time.

The morning service of the church featured harvest festival music by the choir and the congregation. The call to worship, the pastoral prayer, even to the offering itself, which included baskets of fruit and vegetables and other field products—all were suggestive of the occasion. The minister's sermon was on the theme, "The Good Earth." Emphasizing the fact that we can "no longer *just* cut down trees, hunt deer, trap skunks and thereby maintain the American way of life."

## Family Dinner

The second feature of the day was the family basket dinner served in Fellowship Center following the morning worship service. Here the farm families were special guests and a great time of fellowship was enjoyed around the tables. At a given time after dinner, each farm family was called on to state the length of service connection with the church, the distance from town, number of acres in the farm, and the farm specialty, such as corn, wheat, Duroc Jersey hogs and so forth. This feature of the dinner program proved of special interest to all present.

A great many of the people of the church have indicated that this was one of the highlights of the church year. "We must make this an annual event" was heard on every side, by both the farmer folk as well as the townspeople.

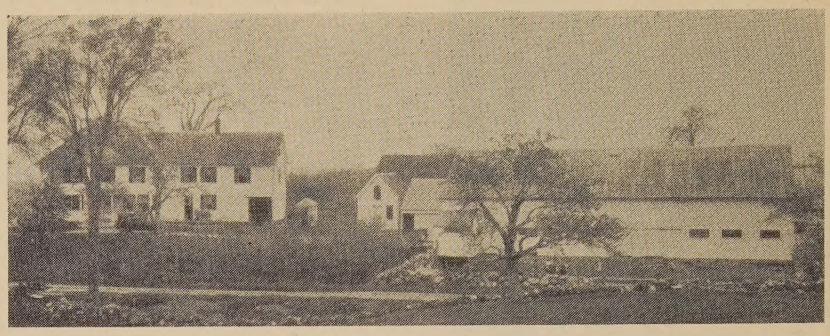
### Benefits Accrue

Now that some time has elapsed since the observance of the Harvest Festival, I think it is safe to assume that some benefits have accrued to us a church because of that fact. The people who live in the town are made more aware of the worthwhile contribution which farm families have to make to the total good of the church. "The town and country meet" as one has stated it. It is difficult to determine whether the farmers or the townspeople benefitted most. It would be more nearly accurate to say that the observance of the festival has resulted in great spiritual benefit to the entire parish.

A subsequent parish visitation and every member canvass reveals the fact that, with only rare exceptions, every family in the parish is now making some financial contribution toward the enlarging and extended program of the church. In past years this has not been true. Since the harvest festival two farm families have asked to be admitted to fellowship within the church. "Our eyes are being opened," they have said. "We want to become a part of this growing family."

As further proof of the fact that rich benefits are the outgrowth of the harvest festival experience, we now have one farm family traveling a distance of almost 25 miles each Sunday to attend the worship services. And on time for church school at 9:45! Another farmer and his wife drive in some 13 or more miles to worship with those who believe in and care for the things that count most!

A new and vital life has come to this county-seat town for many homes through the medium of the Church, which seeks to provide a broad and expanding religious witness for the town and country alike. Better days are ahead as the direct result of the very simple, yet wholesome observance of the harvest.



*U.S.D.A. Photograph by Ackerman*

### How a Veteran Gets a Farm

• The National Farmers' Union recently published the steps whereby a veteran home from World War II can establish himself in farming:

1. If the veteran needs advice about a locality, he may go to the Veterans' Advisory Committee which will function in close relationship with the country agricultural agent.

2. When the veteran has decided on the farm or equipment he wants, he goes directly to a lender, that is, a bank, another credit agency or an individual.

3. The lender then asks the Veterans' Administration to certify as to the veteran's eligibility for a guaranteed loan. If the Veterans' Administration so certifies, an appraiser will be designated. It is understood that the Farm Credit Administration will appraise all land.

4. If the lender finds the appraisal satisfactory, the veteran applies to the Veterans' Loan Certifying Committee, which will be the local county committee of the Federal Security Administration. This group reviews the application and makes a recommendation to the Veterans' Administration which in turn accepts or rejects the application.

The maximum government guarantee of a loan is $2,000, which may be one-half of a total loan of $4,000. Guaranteed loans on real estate are limited to twenty years and interest rate of 4%. In Washington, the Veterans' Administration has the final responsibility for this aspect of the G. I. Bill of Rights.

### Lespedeza

• Under the title of *Benefactor,* the *Farm Journal and Farmer's Wife,* Philadelphia, for January runs the following item:

"A little-known benefactor of American agriculture died without much public attention in Decatur, Illinois, the other day—Dr. Ralph G. Mills, retired Presbyterian medical missionary.

"Back in 1916, Dr. Mills, walking along the shores of the Yellow Sea in Korea, noticed a plant that somewhat resembled our alfalfa. Native cattle relished it. Dr. Mills sent a small packet of seed to the USDA, where it lay for three years, and almost got swept out, before an agronomist happened across it. He identified it as lespedeza. It was planted and grew so luxuriantly that USDA immediately asked Mills for 300 pounds of seed. In two years he managed to get 30.

"Korean lespedeza now leads all other crops in Missouri, and is important in a dozen other mid-southern states. It has helped remake the agriculture of that region by encouraging livestock production and checking erosion.

"In Korea Dr. Mills also discovered ephedra—the plant that has given us ephedrine, used to relieve colds. His herbarium, turned over to Peking University, contained other plants of medicinal value, for which Dr. Mills received neither money nor fame.

"At his death he had assembled another herbarium."

# A Rural-Urban Coordinating Council

C. S. HUNSINGER

When rural people visit their shopping-centre towns and cities, are they as welcome to enjoy the church services, the public library, Y.M.C.A., and other recreational facilities as to visit the cafes, pool rooms and dance floors?

Do the Chamber of Commerce, service clubs and other civic groups include the surrounding country people in their welfare projects or are the "corporation limit" signs the real boundaries of their service?

The public organizations of the city of Bellevue, Ohio, include their rural neighbors in all their civic plans and have actually named the surrounding trade area "Greater Bellevue."

This was not always the case but is the definite result of the organization of a Rural-Urban Coordinating Council here described, and which can easily be organized in any community. More than a hundred public projects which are typical of the common needs of the average rural community, have been accomplished with this organization. It is especially capable of handling ticklish projects and problems because it provides an opportunity for ministers to sponsor and influence civic work. This is possible because it unites all the constructive forces of both the city and the surrounding rural communities into a powerful and effective group.

Contact between the vital and constructive forces of the city of Bellevue, Ohio, and country is the secret of an effective organization of this type. This has been brought about through five general committees: Government, Education, Religion, Economic and Social. Through these committees it is possible for the rural or urban sponsors to meet with any or all of the civic organizations or government officials, either directly or through the Rural or Urban Coordinators.

## Method of Organization

In order to organize a Rural-Urban Council, the sponsors simply invite to a public meeting the following: the presidents of each Board of Township Trustees in the area, presidents of each Board of Education, the superintendents of schools, presidents of Parent-Teacher Associations, all pastors and Sunday School superintendents, the heads of all Farm Bureaus and cooperatives, the managers of all public utilities, newspaper editors, masters of all Granges, 4-H Club leaders, etc., etc.

In this preliminary meeting, the plan is discussed from a general viewpoint and a list of possible public projects suggested, especially emphasizing some one popular project that is needed. After nominating a temporary chairman for each separate township or district, the representatives are asked to discuss the matter with their people.

Each Township Chairman is then requested to call a meeting of his local citizens with their special invitations to heads of all public organizations and to propose the organization of a Township Council, (or other District) using a formal ballot in order that the Council may be entirely legal and democratic. It is best for each township or district to organize separately in this way as it is generally necessary that public projects be acted upon by the township trustees, boards of education, and in accordance with the legal boundaries.

## Projects Accomplished

The following projects have actually been accomplished by the Rural-Urban Coordinating Council of the City of Bellevue, Ohio and surrounding Townships and will show the possibilities in other areas:

*Public Library Service*—The Bellevue Coordinating Council put through a library project which gave the rural people convenient and efficient library service in their shopping centre-town. This was the first time in the State of Ohio that library funds were allocated over county lines.

*Fire Protection*—Ohio state laws were amended in order to create a fire protection district and definite contracts have been made between the city and surrounding townships.

*Rationing Boards*—As Bellevue is located in the extreme corner of four separate counties, it has always presented problems for both the city and five surrounding townships so the community has been a test-tube for the accomplishment of governmental problems, among them rationing. The Council was influential in arranging for the Bellevue Board to serve the people directly thus eliminating the necessity of their driving anywhere from 15 to 20 miles to the various county seats.

*Rural Map and Address System*—Upon completion of the Fire Protection Contract a map of the surrounding rural areas was made. This showed the names and locations of every farm and provided a definite address system which has united the community in many ways.

*Recreational Facilities*—The city playgrounds, swimming pool and other recreational programs in the city of Bellevue have been made available to the rural young people.

*Juvenile Delinquency*—When the Bellevue Ministerial Association needed public support to prevent the opening of a questionable tavern the cooperation of the Rural Coordinator was enlisted because he represented 4500 people living in "Greater Bellevue."

*U.S.D.A. Photograph by Madeleine Osborne*

# New Hampshire Commissions a Minister For Life Work in Rural Areas

ROBERT G. ARMSTRONG

• Why should we be concerned about the small town and rural church?

Because these churches are the "source springs" of seventy-five per cent of our leadership, not only for the ministry but for all walks of life. Because better than seventy-five per cent of the increase of church membership in our city churches comes from these fields. Because in all of our cities the death rate exceeds the birth rate. Only in the country does the birth rate exceed the death rate. With the cessation of immigration, our cities are dependent upon the rural areas for the maintenance of their populations. It is, therefore, tremendously important that we "keep the source springs pure."

How are we doing this?

For many years our national and state home missionary organizations have been subsidizing such churches. We have been concerned about having the right type of leadership. We have sought to develop better techniques for rural work. But the curse of the rural church has been the short-term pastorate. Men have had to leave these fields for more lucrative churches in order to educate their children and to care for their family needs. A short pastorate cannot build firm foundations for the future.

New Hampshire is blazing a new trail! The Board of Trustees of the New Hampshire Congregational Christian Conference, after careful study, has voted to commission a well-qualified man for life work in the rural churches of New Hampshire, on much the same terms as the American Board commissions a man for life service in the foreign field. He will receive a base salary and house, car allowance, health insurance, grants-in-aid when his children are of college age, and his Pilgrim Annuity membership.

On his part, he will yield himself and his service to the direction of the Board of Trustees, who will decide where he shall serve and the length of his service in that given place. He will find his satisfaction, not in ecclesiastical preferment, but in the realization that he is, in the judgment of the Board of Trustees, serving in the most needy field in the state. Of course the term "needy field" will not always mean the most destitute. It may be a case of the field's needing just the leadership he can give at the time of a particular emergency. As he continues his service he will, naturally, develop certain abilities and techniques that will make him increasingly efficient in meeting the problems of the rural field.

Marshall M. Stevenson, of Pierpont, New Hampshire, will be the first man thus commissioned for life work in the home missionary field. A Harvard graduate, an excellent musician, an athlete, a good executive, a thorough student, a leader of men and a warm-hearted pastor, he comes to this important work well equipped.

His first field of service will be in Canterbury, where one of his major tasks will be to lead the community in the rebuilding of the meeting-house, which was destroyed by fire. He will also seek to bring the church to self-support and to create a church life, with a strong organization, to go forward into the future with courage and vision. This may take five or seven years.

When he has completed his work there, he will be sent to another field—perhaps not as attractive in many ways as is Canterbury, but with a deep need to be met. He accepts this commission with a deep sense of privilege and a real spirit of consecration. Mr. Stevenson began his work the early part of November. A special commissioning service will be held in connection with the annual meeting of the Conference in May.—*The Missionary Herald.*


## Town & Country Church

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# Let Us Reverse the Trend

RICHARD O. COMFORT

For many years the cities in America have drained much of the talent from the rural areas. Many of the most intelligent, most creative, and most ambitious young people have left their country homes to seek their fortunes in the "land of opportunity." Those who love the country and try to help make it richer and fuller for those who live there know how devastating this trend can be in a given community. Many rural preachers are without young and middle aged people today because these have gone to seek economic and cultural opportunities that can now be found in the cities. Soon many of these people will be returning to the land. Neither they nor the men and women in the armed forces of our country are going to be satisfied with the same old life they had before leaving their country homes.

## Interchange

For too many years the only part of the city that the surrounding country villages and homes have experienced has been the commercial amusement places that have invaded their area and exploited their young people. It is time that those of us who are dedicated to the great task of building a better rural America reverse the trend that has been operating so long to the detriment of the country life of our land. Much has been written about the necessity of helping the rural people have more economic security. With this I am in hearty accord. But rural people need and want more than economic security. We need to hasten the process of the diffusion of the best culture traits from the city to the country and to retard the diffusion of those traits that will not benefit the rural people.

In the world in which we are living and will live we need to promote an interchange of the best culture traits of the cities and the nearby rural areas. Only in this way can both the city and the rural areas be benefited. Only in this way can we build a real understanding among the people of the city and of the rural areas throughout the world. Every country preacher could and should try to reverse the trend which has been so harmful to the rural people in America. This can be done in many ways in his own locality.

## Community Needs

It is strange that in America we often find the most ignorant, most backward, most helpless and most hopeless rural people in the edge of some of our larger cities which pride themselves on being the cultural centers of our land. This is true not only of our cities but also of those smaller places in which the educational centers are located. It is often found that the county in which a State University is located has not only a high illiteracy rate but also other characteristics which we have found to be undesirable. These educational institutions have not influenced the surrounding communities as much as they should. There are some notable exceptions but even here much more could and should be done than is now being accomplished.

In a church only fifteen miles from Nashville, Tennessee (the Athens of the South) a Chinese pastor was invited to speak on a Sunday. Most of the congregation had never seen a Chinese. Very few of them had ever heard one speak and only a few had ever talked with one personally or eaten a meal with one. Yet for years there have been Chinese people in the educational institutions of Nashville. At Scarritt College there are always some Chinese students. Often there are students from foreign countries at Vanderbile University, George Peabody College for Teachers, and at Fisk University.

It is time for the country people to start taking advantage of the opportunities that may be found in the nearby cities. An interested person may be all that is needed. That person may be the school teacher or the minister. The people who heard this Chinese pastor talk have a new attitude toward Chinese people.

## Student Leaders

In university centers there are many opportunities to reach out and influence the people living in the shadow of the university but yet who never enter its doors. At Vanderbilt University this has been and is being done very successfully by organizing deputation teams of students, often including a student from another country who go out and spend a week-end in a rural community nearby. On Saturday night a social is held in which new games are learned, stories are told, experiences are shared, and a good time is had by all. On Sunday morning the students teach Sunday school classes in the various churches and often when possible take charge of the morning services.

On Sunday afternoon discussion groups are held in which knowledge is shared and understanding is created not only between city and country people but also between people of different backgrounds and cultures. Of course the students are trained for this work and gladly pay their own transportation expenses. The people of the community are happy to furnish the meals and lodging for the week-end. Experience has shown that this experiment

*U.S.D.A. Photograph by Madeleine Osborne*

has been mutually beneficial for all concerned and it is one way to help build world brotherhood while we strengthen rural life.

In most cities there are plenty of available resources that may be had for the asking. Foreign students, doctors, returned missionaries, ministers, farm leaders, and many other people will gladly accept an invitation to visit a nearby rural community and share with the people there some of their experiences. We need to utilize these resources which will help make life in the country richer and fuller for those who live there. County agents and home demonstration agents often are happy to find a person who will cooperate with them in promoting the welfare of the whole community. County health workers are usually happy to find an interested person who will help them in their work. The opportunity is here. Will we take advantage of it to better serve our rural communities?

### Prayer for Rural Life

• Grant, our Father, that Thy blessing shall rest richly on the folk of the countryside. Let Thy guardianship be ever about them; defend their rights and liberties; prosper the labor of their hands, and give the increase of fields and flocks as their portion. May they ever cherish and support Thy Church in their midst and keep the lamp of faith burning. Make them a blessing to the whole nation—a bulwark of those sanctities and integrities of life, that make man great. From our rural homes do Thou bring forth men and women who shall be strong and great in reverence for Thee, and love and honesty, truth and justice, as Thou dost place them as salt in the country's life. *Amen.*—From *The United Church Observer.*

### Community Training Institutes

• Marjory Dickinson writes that four Community Training Institutes are being held at Rio Grande College, Rio Grande, Ohio. One of these dealt with "Home Made Music." At the first Institute, President McDermott of Rio Grande, made an address describing the life and work of John Frederick Oberlin.

### The Country Preacher

• A recent issue of the *Presbyterian Survey,* Richmond, Virginia, contains an article on the topic above by Henry W. McLaughlin, director of Country Church and Sunday School Extension. Dr. McLaughlin quotes at length from Dr. Pierce Harris, minister of the First Methodist Church of Atlanta, who pays a tribute to the country preacher of the South. Dr. Harris stated, among other things, the following:

"The country preacher carries on! Making more visits than a doctor! Making more speeches than a lawyer! Studying harder than a schoolteacher! Spending more energy than an insurance agent! In addition to all these services—underpaid, and in an atmosphere of sacrifice, he must know the path from the cities of this earth to the *'city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God,'* and be good enough to lead the way. His contribution to civilization is character. I stand with my hat off in his presence."

### Joyful Singing

• One hundred popular songs from twenty countries are compiled in a booklet, title above, published by Cooperative Recreation Service, Delaware, Ohio. It is edited by Lynn Rohrbough. Single copies are 25c each.

### Bulletins on Rural Education

• Dr. Mabel Carney, Marseilles, Ill., has compiled a useful one-page list of *Bulletins for Teachers of Rural and Village Schools.*

### Reading Lists

• The Committee on Town and Country, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y., will mail you while the supply lasts, without charge, the leaflet entitled *Recommended Reading.* It consists of "A Selected Reference and Study List on Rural Life and Rural Church Work." It is compiled by the Rev. William J. Rupp who is in charge of a country church of the Evangelical-Reformed Church.

The United Christian Missionary Society, 222 Downey Avenue, Indianapolis 7, Indiana, has available a reading list entitled *Study Your Job in the Town and Country Church,* available in leaflet form.

### Farm Census Begins

• Twenty-six thousand farm census enumerators have been at work taking the 1945 census of agriculture. The census is now taken every five years.

### Book Review

*Farm and Rural Life After the War,* edited by Joseph Ackerman, Champaign, Illinois, the Garrard Press, 1944, $1.00.

This book contains the proceedings of the 24th American Country Life Conference, sponsored by the American Country Life Association. The conference addressed itself to the probable condition in which agriculture will find itself at the end of the war. There are committee reports on the following subjects: "Kinds of Farms After the War"; "Living Standards for Rural People"; "Educational Standards for Rural People"; "Cooperative Activities of Farm People"; "World Relations that Affect the American Farmer."

# Community in Iowa

CARLTON W. SAYWELL

There are several factors and problems that I observed in the Mt. Ayr community that might be given some consideration:

1. There are hosts of people living several miles out of town that are not being reached by any church. We discovered children that had never been to any Sunday School or church.

2. There is a problem of regular attendance due to road and weather conditions. There is need for improved roads and transportation. We need a share-a-ride plan in the country.

3. There is great need for fellowship and social life of farm families. Due to labor shortage and desire for higher production farmers are working excessive hours and have little time for social life. They are too tired for any kind of spiritual or social program. Sunday is just another day to work.

4. There are problems of shifting farm families because of one year rental methods. The Church should encourage longer lease periods. The Church should encourage farm ownership.

5. There is a lack of knowledge of neighbors and little visitation among farmers. There is a definite need in church program for fellowship and social life. Some kind of "know-your-neighbors" program is needed.

6. There is a high percentage of young farm families in this area. There are 92 young married people in the Mt. Ayr district that the Mt. Ayr church should be responsible for reaching for Christ. There are about 15 fine young married folks in the church now.

7. We outlined an extensive outreach program for church including:

a. Teams to unchurched nearby centers, Sunday Schools and preaching services.

b. Young People's program and opportunities.

c. Increased social and fellowship program, especially among the young married people.

d. Building improvement committee, to get busy at once.

# A Pastor's Prayer

LOUISE ACKERMAN

"Our Father," Thou almighty God,
How privileged we are to call Thee by that name.
Thy love for us, our constant need for Thee,
The close companionship we have with Thee,
All these we know within us as we say
"Our Father,
"Who art in heaven," Thine eternal home,
The home so far above our worth, our world,
Yet close and warm for all who know Thy love,
And find, in glory, joy and peace with Thee
"Who art in heaven."

"Hallowed be Thy name." Yes, may we honor Thee
In all our words, in all our deeds,
That others seeing us may know Thy ways.
Oh, that our love for them might mirror Thine.
"Hallowed be Thy name."

"Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done," Thy rule,
Thy sovereignty, Thy lovely way of love,
Thy joy, Thy mercy, and Thy perfect peace.
"Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done
"On earth as it is in heaven," our brightest hope,

That all things earthly, all created life,
Shall be transformed by Thee with heavenly light,
That love may grow among these verdant hills,
Within these homes, along these dusty roads,
To warm these human hearts and common lives
"On earth as it is in heaven."

"Give us this day our daily bread," we pray,
Our simple needs, and satisfy our hearts,
That mean anxiety may never rule,
Nor hunger twist our souls, but, fed and warmed
By our own strength, made strong and sure by Thine
We may devote our lives to serving Thee.
"Give us this day our daily bread."

"And forgive us our debts." We owe Thee, Lord, so much,
All love and joy, all peace and sympathy.
We owe our very selves to live for Thee
In love for others, work and sacrifice.
"Forgive us our debts
"As we forgive our debtors." Cleanse our lives
Of grudges held and hurts that we have nursed.
Teach us forgiveness of enemies,
Yes, those who hate and kill our loved ones—God,
Teach us to know Thy greater love
"As we forgive our debtors."

"And lead us not into temptation." Lord,
Lead Thou our lives in paths where we may grow
In love, in loyalty, in high resolve.
"Lead us not into temptation
"But deliver us from evil." Sin and hate
Do press upon our souls intent to kill
And selfishness within would kill our lives,
But Thou canst save. Thou canst redeem.
Oh, by Thy agony of love upon the cross
"Deliver us from evil."

"For Thine is the kingdom
"And the power
"And the glory
"Forever." *Amen.*

# The Church Must Not Neglect Her Vineyard

• The Protestant church of America and the movement for Christian education are facing no problem of more crucial importance than that of the program of the Church for town and country.

The farms of the nation provide the basic resources for her physical sustenance. They also provide a natural setting for developing that quality of rugged, forthright, and clear-cut manhood out of which must come much of the leadership of the nation in fields of education, religion, social reconstruction, and statecraft.

But as yet the Church is only beginning to develop any adequate strategy for cultivating this natural vineyard of basic religious attitudes and Christian leadership. Through the years we have not represented the rural field effectively to young ministers in terms of its spiritual potential. We have instead allowed them to view it as a training ground for city parishes.

It has not received proper attention of curriculum writers, who could motivate rural youth immeasurably by pointing out the spiritual significance of their tasks and their divine-given opportunities. The officials of the churches and the field representatives of our boards of Christian education have not yet devised procedures for serving the rural field except as areas adjacent to city centers with plans devised for city consumption.

The greatest obstacle to an effective Christian program in the rural areas of our nation is our divided church front. Town of twenty-five hundred people maintain as many as ten churches, sometimes two of the same denomination. Often these churches have no plan for united community action. They take pride in their separate insignia and freedom for action which frequently results in no action at all. Instead of organizing for cooperation with the school and the extra-church character building agencies in a program to combat character-destroying forces of the community, they make it possible for these forces to persist because of the confusion and discouragement of Christian people which results from the lack of any unified command.

—Roy G. Ross, *General Secretary,* International Council of Religious Education, in the booklet *Stewards of the Soil.*

### A Farm School Project

• The Rural Life Association, Richmond, Indiana, has been offered the free use and income of a 250-acre farm near Waynesville, Ohio. The place is to be used as a farm school for young men and women who wish advice and training as they prepare for some rural vocation. The homestead has been a "Quaker farm" for 135 years. It was a station on the Underground Railroad. The Rural Life Association is raising funds for furnishings, equipment and tools.

### Cleveland Study Conference

• The message to the churches from the National Study Conference on the Churches and a Just and Durable Peace, held at Cleveland, Ohio, January 16-19, is being published by the Federal Council's Commission on a Just and Durable Peace, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y., at 10c per copy.

### Land, Homes and the Church

• Rev. I. W. Moomaw publishes an interesting pamphlet for the General Mission Board, Church of the Brethren, 22 South State Street, Elgin, Illinois, on the topic listed above. It contains, among other things, information about the "Parish Loan Plan" whereby this denomination provides long-term loans to qualified tenant families at a moderate interest rate for the purchase of farm homes in the church community.

### Relocating the Dislocated

• The minister or lay leader wishing advice as to the best ways of assisting the Japanese American evacuees, may secure a mimeographed guidebook under the title above, by writing to the Committee on Resettlement of Japanese Americans, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

### Stewards of the Soil

• Friends of the Soil, Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, publishes a booklet by Rev. Eugene Smathers of Big Lick, Tennessee, on the subject above. Mr. Smathers' message presents both philosophy and practical method for the minister and lay worker of the local church. Single copies 10c each.

### Rural Community Settlement

• Dr. J. Winfield Fretz of the Mennonite Central Committee, writes under the title above a series of "Case Studies of Mennonite Communities in Canada." It is published by the Rural Life Association, Quaker Hill, R.R. 2, Richmond, Indiana. It is edited by Stanley Hamilton, the executive secretary. The booklet tells about the way various land settlements were managed and how they have worked out their affairs. ($.25)

### Contributors

• Walter H. Upton is minister of the Congregational Christian Church at McPherson, Kansas.

C. S. Hunsinger, who lives at Flat Rock, Ohio, is the "rural co-ordinator" of the council he describes.

Robert G. Armstrong is the minister of the Congregational Christian Conference in New Hampshire.

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Carlton W. Saywell is director of Town and Country Work of the Baptist churches in Iowa.

Louise Ackerman is a minister who wrote the "Pastor's Prayer" after a three-year pastorate in rural Vermont.

### Contributions Wanted

• Every reader is a potential contributor of material for this paper.

We need three types of material:

(1) Articles of about 900 words (to fill a page), descriptive of a local program.

(2) Short items; news, plans, publications available.

(3) Illustrations; glossy photos, line drawings, cuts of rural scenes.

### Circulars Available

• Quantities of circulars describing Town and Country Church are available without charge to any reader. Simply drop us a post card, letting us know how many copies you would like to distribute.